

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: April 14, 2016

Agenda Item: Land Reconciliation

Division: Director's Office

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 Min

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Background:

There are approximately 16 parcels of property managed by State Parks that were purchased all or in part with hunting/fishing license dollars, federal Pittman Robertson dollars, or Dingell Johnson dollars. The use of these funding sources requires that the lands remain under the direction of the director of the fish and wildlife agency and be utilized for their original purpose. The title for lands owned by FWP is in the name of the agency, which is the legal entity established in statute. Lands cannot be deeded to individual divisions, i.e. fisheries, wildlife and parks.

At the February Parks Board meeting, the State Parks budget priorities for the 2017 Legislative Session were approved as presented with the added priority to resolve and address the issues of land management and disposition between the Fisheries, Wildlife and Parks Divisions.

There is only one parcel of land purchased with fish and wildlife funding and managed by State Parks where the agency has identified a situation that it is obligated to address. A portion of West Shore State Park was originally purchased with wildlife funding for wildlife purposes that no longer exist. The agency is required to replace this portion of the property with lands of equal value containing the original wildlife purposes.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

Commission meetings, Parks Board meetings, and public meetings will be used to allow full involvement of the public as FWP moves through the process.

Alternatives and Analysis:

If FWP does not address the change of use at West Shore State Park, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) may declare the state in a diversion status and Montana may not be eligible to receive the \$27m of Pittman Robertson, Dingell Johnson, and State Wildlife Grant funding that is available to us.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale:

We are asking the Commission to allow us to explore options to resolve this issue and avoid a diversion ruling from the FWS.

Proposed Motion:

I move to allow the Department to explore options to resolve the potential federal diversion issues at West Shore State Park and bring those options to the Fish and Wildlife Commission and Parks Board for their consideration.